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South Korea's Move Toward Democracy: A New Look at the Electorate

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An Intelligence Assessment

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*EA 87-10051
November 1987*

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [redacted]
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South Korea's Move Toward Democracy: A New Look at the Electorate

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 18 November 1987
was used in this report.*

As South Korea approaches its first direct presidential election in 16 years, ruling- and opposition-party contenders face an electorate that has changed dramatically:

- Voters today are better educated and better paid, more urbanized, less class conscious, and less traditional in their attitudes and loyalties.
- Half were born after the Korean war, making them increasingly skeptical of the national security rationale that has justified a military-dominated government.

Because open elections are the exception rather than the rule in Korea, we lack an accurate record of the election behavior of well-established as well as new constituencies. Voter opinion also is likely to shift as the campaign unfolds, making predictions difficult. Nonetheless, our analysis of USIA and other polling data suggests some clear trends in voter attitudes—including some potentially surprising twists, particularly among the newer constituencies:

- *The labor vote*, numbering 8.2 million, which has grown along with industrialization, is now a more politically complex bloc. We believe that middle-aged workers, young women working in factories, and the urban poor will largely back the opposition. But concern that the policies of an opposition leader might hurt the major conglomerates—their employers—could influence male blue-collar workers to lean more toward the ruling camp than most politicians and political commentators assume.
- *The white-collar vote*, another growing bloc—now 5.7 million strong—includes technocrats and executives as well as younger, less educated workers hoping to avoid the blue-collar track. Despite their history of siding with the opposition by casting a protest vote against military-dominated government, those on the top rungs of the economic ladder may favor the ruling camp in December. The political leanings of most other white-collar workers are harder to discern, reflecting the tension between their desire for democracy and their doubts about the leadership qualities of the opposition. Those who are younger and aspiring to white-collar status, however, are still likely to go with the opposition.
- *The women's vote*, including 5.8 million full-time urban housewives, is one of the largest constituencies. Wives of white-collar workers are likely to support an establishment candidate; blue-collar housewives appear inclined toward the opposition. In both cases, however, their husbands' views are likely to influence how these voters mark their ballots.

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- *The farm vote*, totaling 5.1 million, was once the bedrock of conservative support but is steadily shrinking. Although farmers have grown increasingly dissatisfied because of changing government policies, including reduced subsidies, we expect their desire for stability and continuity will predispose them toward a conservative candidate.
- *The student vote*, numbering 760,000, is a small but key group. Students are likely to lean toward the opposition. Even so, opinion polls in October suggested some, who view the opposition's two Kims—Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam—as “political dinosaurs,” could see ruling-party candidate Roh Tae Woo as an acceptable step toward democratization.

With little experience at gauging the interests and concerns of the voters, both the ruling and opposition camps are attempting to appeal to a broad, largely illusory “middle class,” rather than tailoring their pitch to the diverse groups that in fact make up the electorate. Because constituencies are clearly divided and capable of swinging, we see considerable room for fine tuning by both government and opposition campaigners:

- [] the ruling camp is downbeat about its appeal to younger voters, but our analysis shows that Roh could make some gains with them, particularly among blue-collar workers and even some students.
- The ruling party may also be missing the mark if it is depending on manipulation of the 650,000-strong military vote, as it has in the past. In a freer election environment, Roh may not be able to count on manipulating the vote of young draftees.
- Finally, both camps may regard regionalism as a more important factor than we think it will be. The “native son” factor is likely to enhance Kim Dae Jung's vote-getting ability in the southwest, but our study of polling data suggests that, apart from this factor, broad political attitudes do not divide along clear regional lines.

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If the new president is elected in December by a plurality, the lessons learned about voter preference will be important as he tries to mobilize support and elect a loyal following during National Assembly campaigning to be held by next spring. A parliamentary majority could be crucial to determining whether the new president can rule effectively.

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**South Korea's Move Toward
Democracy: A New Look
at the Electorate**

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Scope Note

This Assessment identifies the constituencies that have emerged in South Korea since the last direct presidential election in 1971 and examines the factors that will influence their selection in December of a successor to President Chun Doo Hwan. No attempt is made to predict the election outcome, which remains highly uncertain. Separate assessments are in process on the outlook for the presidential campaign and the role of the South Korean military in the political transition.

Our primary statistical analysis of voter attitudes depended heavily on a USIA opinion survey of 2,000 Koreans taken in November 1986 and on a detailed, unreleased survey by the progovernment *Kyunghyang* newspaper in September 1985. The *Kyunghyang* poll, based on a nationwide sample of 1,000 Koreans, has been done annually with government support; its results in 1985 were leaked to an antigovernment expatriate paper and appear to be genuine. The paper also draws on other economic, sociological, and demographic data on South Korean society.

In studying the electorate, we used various quantitative tools, especially "cluster analysis," which groups respondents in an opinion survey according to similarities in attitudes. The attitudes examined include the voters' views of the society, the steps needed to solve its problems, and the individual's sense of whether he or she could shape political events. Our study of the attitudes of South Korean constituencies, in particular, would not have been possible without the generous help of the East Asia and Pacific Branch, Office of Research, USIA. This Assessment, however, reflects CIA views alone.

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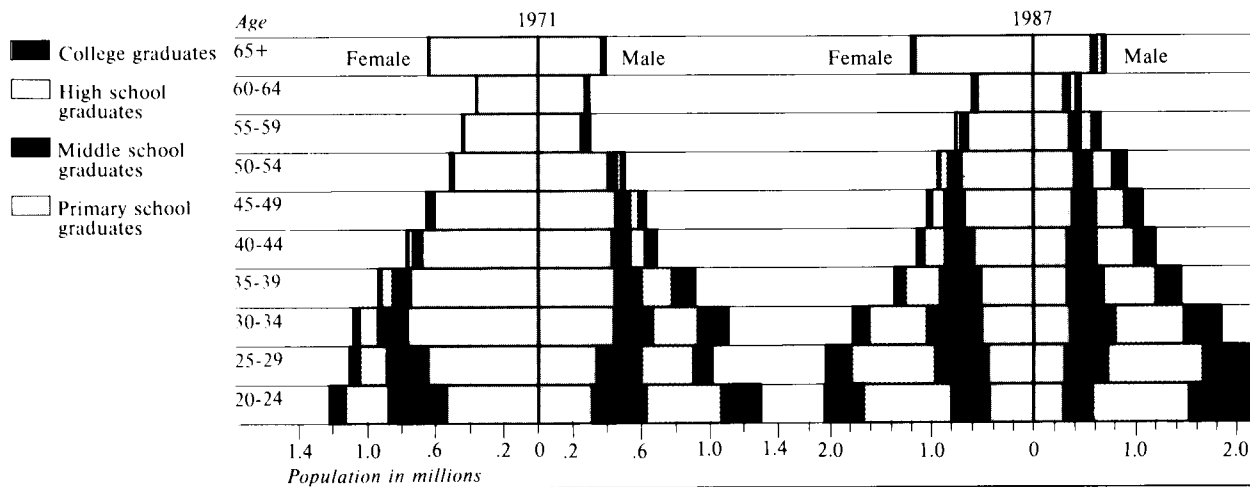
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Figure 1
South Korea's Changing Electorate,
1971 and 1987

Age and Education

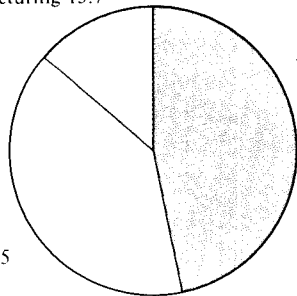


Industrial Employment Structure

Percent

1971

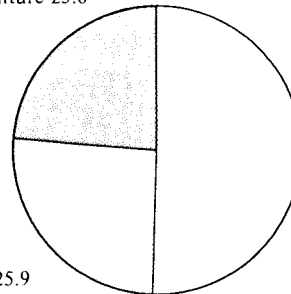
Mining and
manufacturing 13.7



1987

Agriculture 23.6

Services 50.5



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South Korea's Move Toward Democracy: A New Look at the Electorate

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The constitutional amendment approved overwhelmingly in a national referendum in October 1987 has fundamentally altered the political equation in South Korea. Unlike previous presidential elections, in which an indirect electoral college process guaranteed ruling camp victories, the contest on 16 December will be the first since 1971 to be held under a straight one-man, one-vote formula. Far more has changed in the last 16 years than political rules, however. South Korea's dramatic economic growth, the resulting transformation of its society, and the rise of a new, post-Korean war generation have combined to significantly reshape the electorate.

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South Korea's Voters: The New Face of the Electorate

The experiences, lifestyles, and outlooks of South Korea's voting public—26 million strong—differ radically from those of the electorate that voted 16 years ago:

- Voters at all social levels are better educated. The proportion of Koreans eligible to vote who have some college education has risen from 7 to 14 percent. The change is even more dramatic at lower educational levels: only 36 percent in 1971 had gone beyond primary school, compared with some 62 percent today.
- As the nation has industrialized, the electorate has migrated in massive numbers to the cities. Compared with 1971, the proportion of the population living in urban areas has increased from 51 to 76 percent. The share of Koreans living on farms has dropped from 45 to 19 percent.
- With economic development, the income of the voting public has risen substantially. Between 1971 and 1986 the income of the average South Korean, as measured by per capita GNP, has grown from \$940 to over \$2,300, making him the most quickly

advancing—although still by far the least well off—among his counterparts in other newly industrialized Asian countries.

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A new generation of Koreans also dominates the electorate. Fifty-one percent of today's voting age public was born after 1951—a group with no memory of the Korean war and only vague recollections of postwar hardships. Too young to vote in 1971, they have come of age politically during a period when the push for democratization and antagonism toward military-dominated governments intensified.

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Finally, better education, urbanization, and other influences of modernization, such as widespread exposure to radio and television, have blurred the lines that once defined the structure of Korean society. Through the 1950s, even the Japanese colonial occupation and the ravages of the Korean war had not eliminated traditional class structures. Many Koreans note that vestiges of old attitudes and relationships remain, but sociologists have charted dramatic changes as well. According to surveys in South Korea, typically up to 75 percent of the people place themselves in the "middle class."

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Reshaping the Constituencies

The changes that have affected the allegiances and perceptions of the voting public pose an obvious challenge to the contenders vying to replace President Chun Doo Hwan. Our analysis of opinion polling and demographic data, unpublished official political surveys, US Embassy reporting, (b)(1)
 has helped us identify the potentially significant (b)(3)
voting constituencies in this December's election.

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¹ Per capita GNP is measured in constant 1980 dollars. (U)

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The Labor Vote. The rise of a larger, better educated, and better paid industrial work force because of South Korea's industrialization has created a potentially powerful, but diverse voting bloc. We estimate labor accounts for 8.2 million of 26 million potential votes—about 32 percent of the electorate compared with 22 percent in 1971. In our judgment, the nature of the membership can best be understood by dividing it along two lines: age and economic status. [REDACTED]

Industrial workers—most under 35—represent the largest component of this constituency. Spawned by South Korea's emergence as a world-class exporter, they make up about 19 percent of the electorate, and could cast 4.8 million ballots. For the most part, these blue-collar workers have a high turnover rate—25 percent leave their jobs every year—producing a flux that makes their attitudes as a group tough to assess. [REDACTED]

Moreover, a closer look at this component of the labor vote reveals that even the descriptive phrase “blue collar,” with its connotation of relatively unskilled, male workers on an assembly line, is misleading. Forty-four percent of this group, in fact, are young, male factory hands, but:

- Fifty-one percent are young women who work in textiles, electronics, and other light industry. They are more poorly paid than men, receive little training beyond basic production skills, and virtually all—some 90 percent—leave to marry by age 30.
- Skilled male workers represent another 5 percent of this bloc. They have parlayed technical training into more lucrative, stable, higher status industrial employment. Understandably, their turnover rates are far lower than those of their unskilled counterparts. [REDACTED]

The age factor reveals another segment of the labor vote—the *older assembly line worker and the self-employed*, who together number about 1.9 million—23 percent of the labor electorate. Surveys show that this group includes the industrial workers who have remained and aged on the assembly line, settling down to support a family, and those who have moved from large factories into other pursuits, frequently self-employment. [REDACTED]

Using measures of economic well-being to understand the membership of the labor vote highlights another component of this constituency—the *urban poor*. We judge on the basis of sociological surveys, unemployment statistics, and estimates of underemployment, that some 1.5 million people find themselves on the sidelines of the South Korean economy. Despite their marginal economic status, this group, in our view, is likely to vote, given South Korea's history of extremely high turnout rates at the polls. This group's choices probably will be shaped by their economic status, including the hardships of unemployment and work in menial occupations. [REDACTED]

The White-Collar Vote. The top end of this constituency, composed of professionals, successful businessmen, and, increasingly, technocrats and salaried executives, has benefited greatly from South Korea's economic and social transformation. This elite group now consists of 612,000 voters, compared with 217,000 in 1971. The rank-and-file white-collar work force has grown even faster, and the 1.5 million voters in this category now make up 6 percent of the electorate. At the bottom and trying to climb up are several other categories—junior clericals, salesmen, and workers in a growing service sector—that contain younger, less educated people hoping to avoid the blue-collar track. We estimate these aspirants to white-collar status at 3.6 million voters. [REDACTED]

The Women's Vote. Women belong to all categories of voters, but housewives by themselves make up one of the largest constituencies in South Korea: married women who do not work outside the home account for 5.8 million votes.² This is a changing constituency, however, as increasing numbers of wives—particularly of blue-collar workers—enter the work force. The growing diversity of women's experiences is likely to lay the groundwork for more active political participation if women emerge as an independent constituency. [REDACTED]

The Farm Vote. Once the bedrock constituency of conservative politicians, farmers are both declining in numbers and changing as a social group. During the

² This total does not include farm wives. (U)

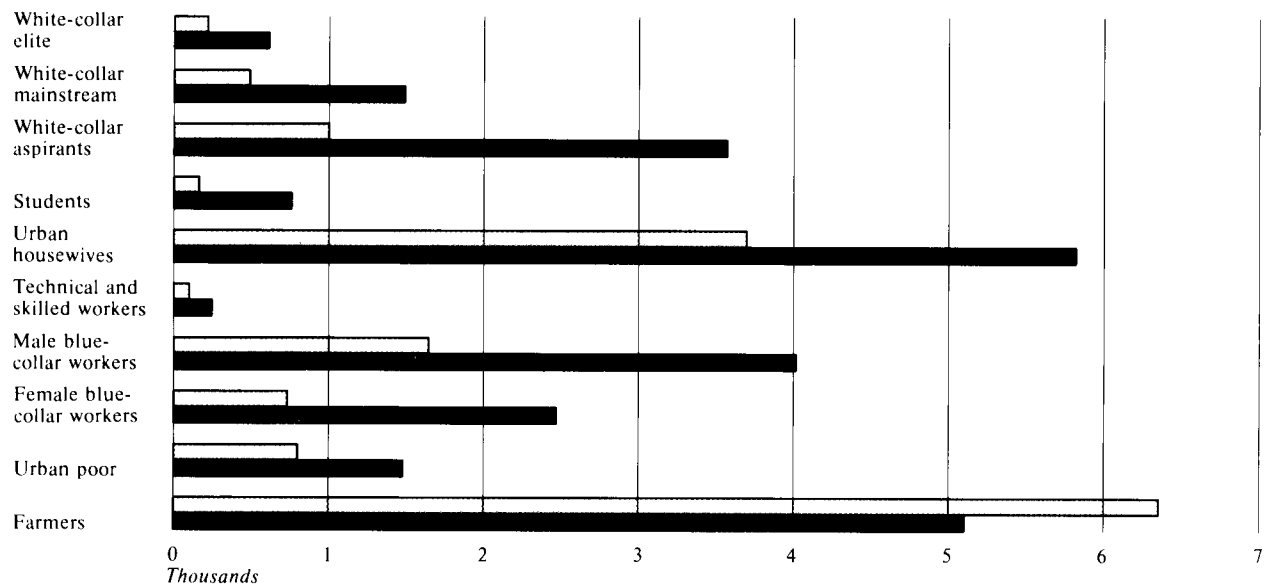
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Figure 2
Transformation of South Korea's
Political Constituencies

□ 1971 ■ 1987

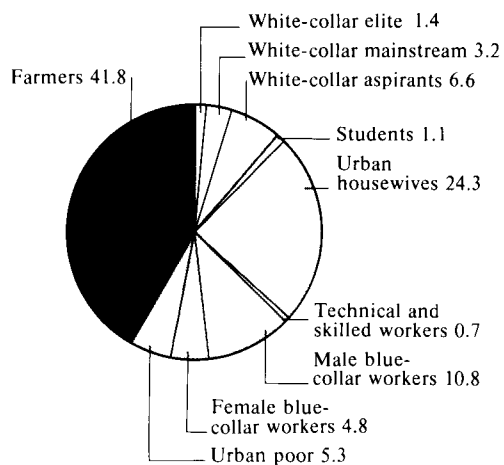
Comparison of Voter Group Size, 1971 and 1987



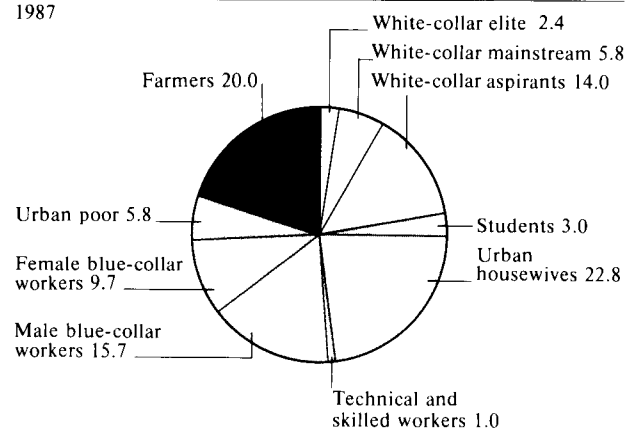
Voter Groups' Shares of the Electorate, 1971 and 1987

Percent

1971



1987



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presidential election in 1971, they accounted for 42 percent of the voters. Based on government statistics, we estimate that this group will account for only 20 percent of the electorate—or about 5.1 million votes—in December. As in other countries with major cityward migrations, those who have remained on the land have found their social structure and economy changing. In Korea, the old authority of village elders has been supplanted by that of middle-aged, better educated, more successful farmers who have different—in some cases less traditional—views. []

The Student Vote. Historically, the role of students as the political conscience of the nation, opinion molders, and activists has not changed, ensuring that they will remain a critical group in the election. Although the student vote is still small—about 760,000 or 3 percent of the electorate—the government's major effort to expand the availability of higher education has more than doubled university enrollment since President Chun took office. Indeed, the number of eligible student voters actually understates the potential impact of a mobilized college population, given that there are some 1.1 million youth on campus who could participate in some way in the campaign this year. []

The Uncertainties

Although we can identify the constituencies in the South Korean electorate, important unknowns hamper our ability to assess how the voters will behave at the polls this year:

- With only one direct presidential election since 1960, we have no track record to judge how the old constituencies will react to the candidates and the issues in the weeks ahead. Moreover, there obviously is no firm basis for estimating how the new groups and the post-Korean war generation will behave in their first-ever direct presidential contest.
- Political polling information also is especially poor in Korea. Straw polls by the parties or other partisan groups show widely varying results that appear to reflect the political affiliation of the polltakers.
- US officials on the scene also have stressed that South Korean voters have yet to form final opinions about the candidates. The Embassy has cautioned that voter attitudes therefore could shift significantly depending on how the campaign unfolds. []

Nonetheless, judging from USIA and other polling data, we believe it is possible to identify some general tendencies in the voters' attitudes and opinions. Although these surveys did not ask voters about their specific choices, they address, in our view, important factors that will guide individual political behavior. These include whether voters believe their ballots will make a difference, their levels of satisfaction with Korean society, their views of whether the economic system equitably distributes wealth and privilege, and their judgments on whether change can come from within the current system or must be driven by more thorough reforms. []

Splitting Their Votes: Labor, White-Collar Workers, and Women

The emerging constituencies in South Korea, in our judgment, reflect divided interests, suggesting that there may be some unusual twists in their behavior at the polls. Opinion sampling indicates:

Within the *labor vote*, young, male blue-collar workers, who constitute the largest element of this constituency, may well vote their pocketbooks rather than follow their inclination to favor sweeping change. Judging from polling data, we believe they are primarily concerned with freer unions, bigger paychecks, and job security. We suspect a significant proportion may fear that an opposition leadership might adopt policies harmful to South Korea's major industries and thereby undermine their own job prospects. Their rebuff of student activists who sought to turn strikes this summer into political demonstrations for broader reforms also suggests their focus remains on labor issues. []

Developments during the campaign obviously could push these voters in different directions. If ruling-party presidential candidate Roh Tae Woo backslides on promises of labor reform, he would almost certainly alienate blue-collar workers who might be inclined to support him. Alternatively, because many younger

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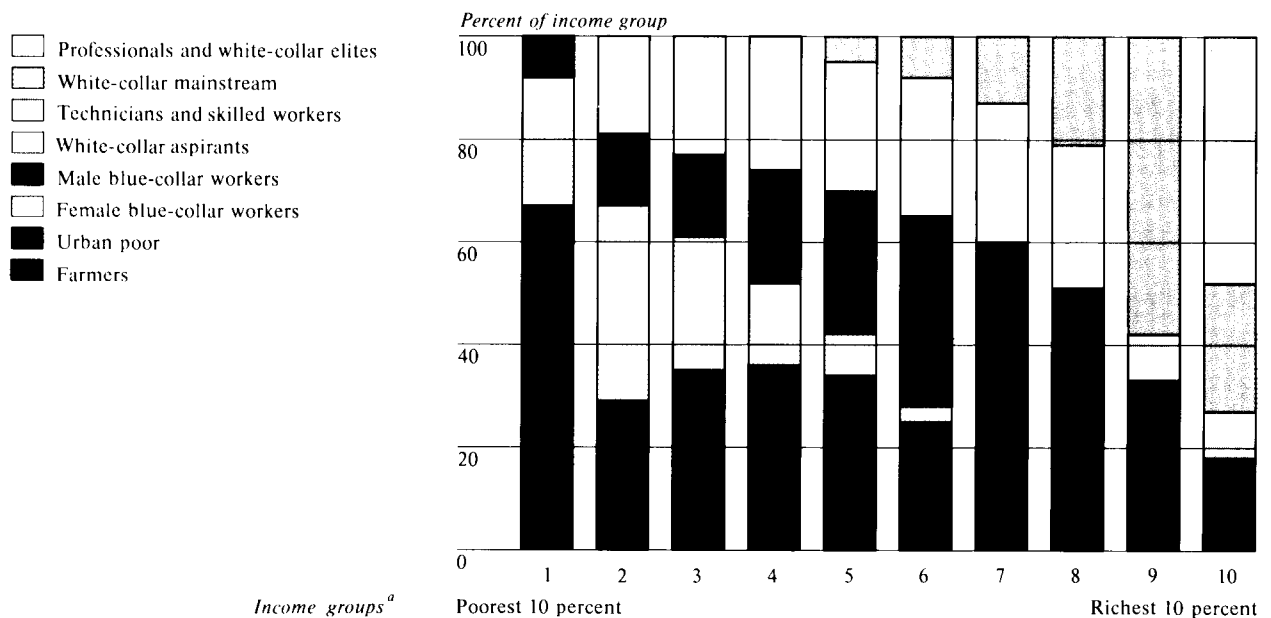
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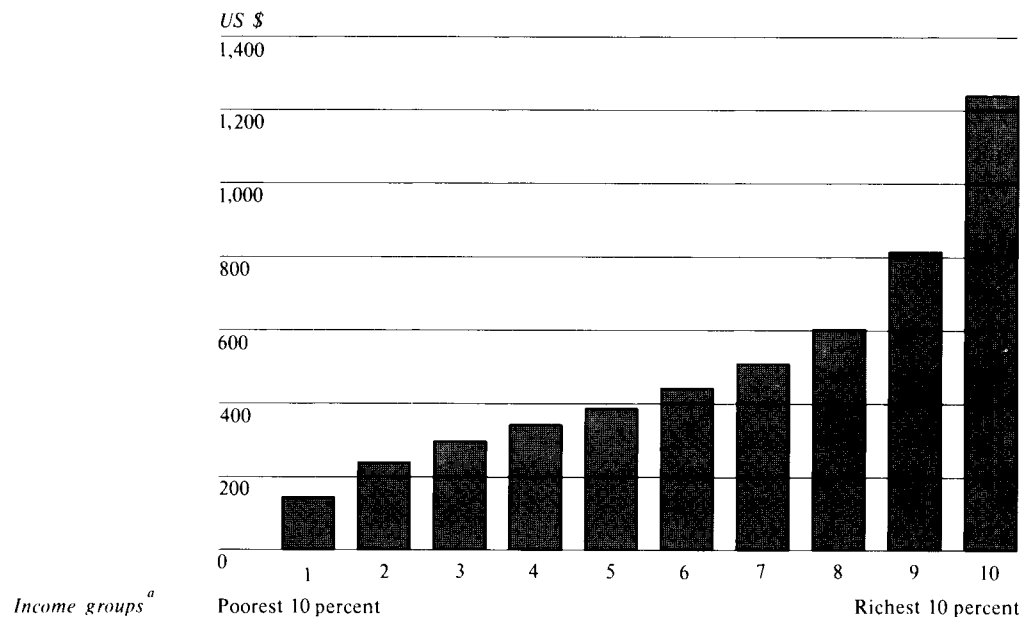
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Figure 3
South Korean Constituencies:
How They Stack Up Economically

Voter Groups in the Income Distribution



Monthly Household Income by Income Group, 1985



^a Each income group contains 10 percent of the economically active voting age population. Students, nonworking wives, and retirees are excluded. The income classifications range from the poorest to richest 10 percent.

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workers are likely to vote at polling booths set up in company dormitories or at industrial work sites, the presence of management or pressure tactics by ruling-party campaign organizers might swing some to the government's side. [REDACTED]

resources on mobilizing their support—literally, buying votes as well as promising new social welfare programs—we suspect Roh Tae Woo could cut into Kim Dae Jung's evident edge, particularly among the poorest. [REDACTED]

With little interest in a factory career for themselves, young women, in our view, are chiefly concerned with opportunities for their prospective husbands. Indeed, opinion data show that young female workers are especially concerned with social equity issues—the gap between rich and poor—and are inclined to favor significant reforms. We believe they may be swayed by these attitudes as well as idealism to support a charismatic figure such as Kim Dae Jung, who has long been identified with fundamental social change. [REDACTED]

More than any other segment of the voting public, white-collar workers believe they deserve and can handle real democracy, according to the opinion survey results. In the past, the *white-collar vote* has generally gone to the opposition as a protest against the military-dominated governments under Presidents Park Chung Hee and Chun Doo Hwan. This record would appear to incline these voters toward opposition moderate Kim Young Sam and, perhaps, the more charismatic and reform-minded Kim Dae Jung. [REDACTED]

Although we have no data that address the attitudes of technicians and other skilled factory workers, logic suggests that their vested interests in their companies would incline them toward more conservative views and candidates. [REDACTED]

In contrast, older assembly line workers and the self-employed may well be moved to support an opposition candidate. According to the surveys, many middle-aged, blue-collar men are dissatisfied with their lot and feel impotent to change the situation. In our view, this group probably also feels economically insecure. In the factories, older workers are being pushed by upwardly mobile, more technically skilled, better educated, younger workers. For these older workers, as well as the self-employed, the opposition's promises of protection from foreign competition, better welfare benefits, and reform of "big business" abuses may well have appeal. [REDACTED]

Our survey information on the urban poor is scanty, although we know that many of those in Seoul come from the home province of Kim Dae Jung. Their economic circumstances suggest that those who are the least well off among labor voters would see real benefits in the broad reforms associated with Kim. Even so, opinion surveys show that the poor are skeptical that their votes matter, and we doubt Kim can count on this group to give him a solid bloc of support at the polls. If the ruling party focused

We believe other factors, however, could impinge on their decision in a direct election in which their votes will truly matter. Judging from our older survey data and the current popular opinion about the race, the white-collar workers' concern with their economic stake, a desire for gradual reform, and their dissatisfaction with the opposition's split may ultimately sway them toward ruling-party candidate Roh as the lesser of two evils. [REDACTED]

Here, too, much is likely to depend on the campaign. All the candidates have liabilities from the white-collar voters' perspective. Kim Dae Jung is distrusted, Kim Young Sam's leadership ability is open to question, and Roh Tae Woo faces a skeptical public over his commitment to democratic reform. In sum, we believe white-collar voters could remain a fluid bloc until the eve of the election. [REDACTED]

The aspirants to white-collar status, ironically, could prove more antiestablishment than their blue-collar peers. Opinion polls show that members of this group, like college students, favor widespread reform and have relatively weak ties to the corporate world. In our view, their expectation of upward mobility and the influence of their contemporaries in college will be key factors in determining how they vote. Anecdotal

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opinion sampling, together with statistical data, suggests younger clerical, sales, and service-sector workers have reason to fear they will never attain mainstream white-collar standing. Egalitarian campaign themes voiced by Kim Dae Jung and his supporters among the student population, therefore, could mobilize this group. [redacted]

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Opinion surveys suggest the *women's vote* also will be divided. According to this sampling, wives of white-collar workers display attitudes, such as a desire to resolve social problems "within the system," that would lead them to support an establishment candidate [redacted] middle- and upper-class housewives are attracted to Roh Tae Woo. Anecdotes about their negative view of Kim Young Sam, who has a reputation as a womanizer, and Kim Dae Jung, whom many regard as disruptive, also support the notion that Roh has the edge with this group. Survey results [redacted] from Seoul indicate that Roh will play less well with the blue-collar housewives. Despite the fact that many consider themselves middle class, blue-collar wives strongly feel the need for thorough social reform. Notwithstanding their own preferences, the political views of their husbands are likely to influence the choices of women voters. [redacted]

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Farmers and Students: Staying the Course?

Compared with its previous lock on a once-powerful *farm vote*, the ruling party in 1987 faces not only a smaller rural constituency, but also one that is less satisfied with the government's policies than in years past. Economic changes have troubled farmers in the 1980s: liberalization of agricultural imports, cutbacks in grain price subsidies and rural development programs, and the continuing gap between urban and rural quality of life have led to dissatisfaction with Seoul's policies. [redacted]

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In addition, the ruling camp has lost some of its tools for controlling the farmers politically. [redacted]

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groups also have organized some farmers to protest government policies, creating an alternative political voice in parts of the countryside. [redacted]

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Despite these problems for the ruling camp, however, opinion surveys suggest that farmers want stability and continuity in government. We believe this predisposes them to Roh's candidacy. Indeed, Roh's democratization initiative in June may well have given him a boost with farmers who were largely dissatisfied with Chun himself. Attitudes among farmers that suggest they see their political power as marginal lead us to believe a majority are still susceptible to mobilization by the government, which almost certainly will mount a major campaign effort among them. [redacted]

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We believe that most of the *student vote* will support opposition candidates. The data indicate students are deeply dissatisfied with society and confident they can make a difference. We believe these views are likely to drive many students to support an opposition front-runner—shifting their support to whichever Kim pulls ahead, for example. [redacted]

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Opinion surveys suggest, however, that student backing for radical reform may be far more shallow than indicated by their extreme rhetoric of the last several years. For example, university professors told visiting US officials in mid-October that campus polls suggested Roh enjoyed a narrow plurality, in contrast with other polls showing that students overwhelmingly favored his opponents. Such results, in our view, may well reflect the fact that [redacted]

[redacted] man' students view the two opposition Kims as "political dinosaurs." Some may even calculate that a Roh presidency would be an acceptable bridge to full "democratization" later, although they may be reluctant to voice this view among their peers. [redacted]

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The Contenders' Campaign Strategies: Through a Glass Darkly

Against the backdrop of South Korea's changed electorate in 1987, both the government and the

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opposition still appear to be a considerable distance from understanding where among the voters their strengths and weaknesses lie. Their problems on this score are basic, in our view. Korean politicians generally have little experience in open election competition. The ruling and opposition parties also are composed of members of the elite—most often from the bureaucracy, the professions, and the better schools—and led by authoritarian figures. As such, the politicians and their campaign managers are distant from the groups, with their concerns and issues, that make up the broader electorate. [REDACTED]

was only one-fourth of those at the top, highlighting the disparities in economic and social position among those labeled “middle class.” With a wide array of potential supporters on the fence—including white-collar and young blue-collar workers—homogenized campaign strategies, at a minimum, are unlikely to attract backers or solidify the loyalty of possibly wavering old ones before election day. [REDACTED]

Missed Opportunities. Most political observers believe that the changes in the Korean electorate have chiefly benefited the opposition. They cite the hard-fought 1971 election, when Kim Dae Jung had a clear upper hand among urban groups, the better educated, and the young. Since then, it has been an article of faith that the opposition enjoys an advantage among these groups, an assumption buttressed by its surprisingly good showing in the 1985 parliamentary elections. [REDACTED]

With only a few weeks before the election, we believe the contenders are guiding their campaigns on the basis of overly simplistic assumptions about their supporters and antagonists that do not account for the new diversity and greater sophistication of the Korean voting public. [REDACTED]

Pitching the Middle Class. The US Embassy has reported that ruling and opposition campaign strategists believe winning the “middle class” is the key to victory. To do so, both camps appear to have fabricated sweeping but very similar platforms intended to appeal to this broad, ill-defined category:

- According to Embassy reporting, Roh has projected the image of a reform-minded leader, interested in labor and social welfare issues as well as flexible in other areas, such as dialogue with P'yongyang.
- Opposition candidates Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung have played down more extreme and controversial themes, including some in the main opposition party's draft platform on shifting operational control of South Korean military forces out of US hands and breaking up business conglomerates. [REDACTED]

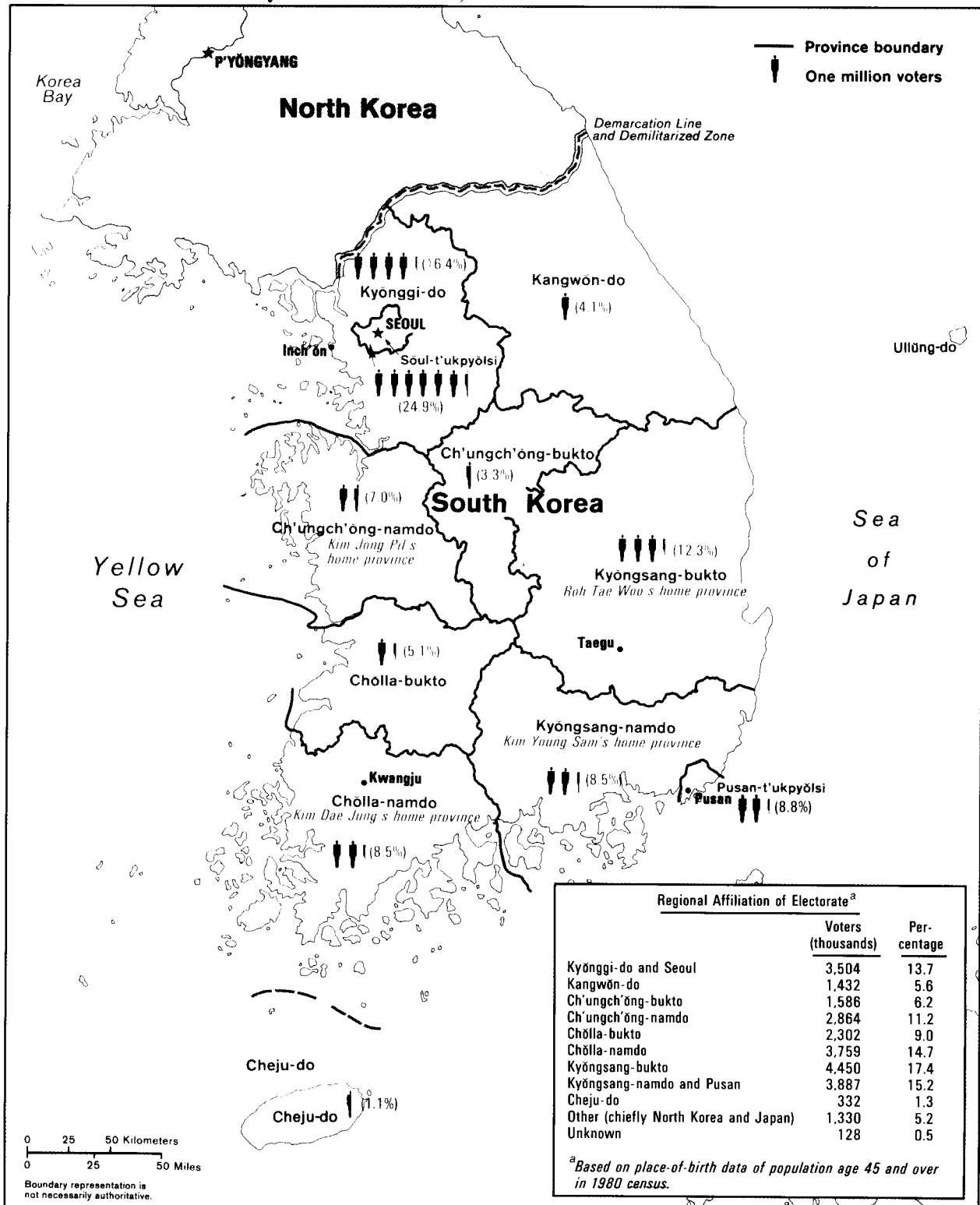
Our review of the background and attitudes of the electorate strongly suggests that strategies intended to appeal generally to a monolithic “middle-class vote” are off the mark. Indeed, the economic background alone of those who claim to be “middle class” drives this point home. In a recent Korean opinion survey, for example, the average household income at the bottom of the group that said it was “middle class”

Our analysis raises questions about the conventional wisdom. Indeed, it would appear that the ruling party and Roh may be ignoring potential supporters in unexpected quarters. Our evidence on students, for example, indicates that if the government returns to a get-tough policy toward activists on campus [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] it could deprive Roh of potential support among the broader student body, and perhaps their parents. Among young blue-collar workers, he also could gain backing by fleshing out promises of sustained labor reforms. In sum, if Roh's strategists have written off most younger voters as beyond their grasp, [REDACTED] the ruling camp may be making a mistake. [REDACTED]

The Regional Question. [REDACTED] both ruling and opposition politicians are weighing the question of regional loyalties heavily in their assessment of their candidates' chances. Their reported analysis includes the judgment that the “native son” factor would let Kim Dae Jung easily take North and especially South Cholla Provinces—the heavily populated but depressed southwest—as well as the large number of Cholla natives residing in

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~~Secret~~**Figure 4****Distribution of Electorate by Current Residence, 27 October 1987**

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Seoul and Pusan. Nationwide, this "Cholla bloc" could account for as much as 25 percent of the electorate. Others believe that historical prejudice against Cholla residents will produce a backlash against Kim Dae Jung's candidacy. [REDACTED]

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

For Kim Dae Jung, regional identity may well be a major factor in the presidential race, but in our view it is likely to be less important for the other candidates. Our public opinion data suggest that underlying political attitudes—toward economic inequities and approaches to reform, for example—do not divide sharply along regional lines. Moreover, the voters themselves give a mixed picture of how regional identities will influence their choices. For example, a newspaper poll in mid-October found that 75 percent of those asked believed regionalism would be an important factor, but a much smaller percentage was willing to predict it would be the dominant factor. [REDACTED]

An Uncertain Military Vote. Drawn into the military by the requirement of universal service, the Army reflects the diversity of South Korea's population in its rank and file. Some 650,000 young men are on active duty in regular military or paramilitary units; history suggests that the ruling party will view the Army as a potential hole card. Although accounting for only 2.5 percent of the electorate, its votes have traditionally been manipulated by requiring soldiers to mark their ballots in public, or by having officers mark absentee ballots themselves. We have little doubt the ruling camp will try to use these techniques again this year, especially if the presidential race remains a close contest. [REDACTED]

Nonetheless, in 1987, we also believe the risks in such a strategy are higher than ever before. Most obviously, the opposition is already watching and plans to monitor polling closely in December. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] enthusiasm for Roh, even in the officer corps, is not overwhelming. [REDACTED]

We have no opinion polling information on the attitudes of the officer corps or the draftees, but we believe most of the professional cadres would vote for Roh in a free election. We suspect many young recruits would support the opposition. Most are at least high school graduates, and their opinions almost certainly parallel those of their peers elsewhere. Moreover, we doubt the Army has changed their outlook on life. Some observers have noted that military service instills a greater awareness of the North Korean threat and therefore a more conservative political outlook. We believe it is equally likely that the Army's often brutal discipline would not endear recruits to their superiors or make them responsive to political guidance from on high. The ruling party still has considerable leverage over the military, but without fixing its vote, any confidence that Roh has the rank and file in the bag is misplaced. [REDACTED]

The December Election: The Electorate and the Morning After

The danger that student and labor unrest may provoke the military to intervene remains a concern in Seoul, but most Korean observers appear optimistic that the election will occur on schedule. The balloting in December will present a clearer picture of the effect of economic and social change on the voters. With four contenders in the race, the likelihood of a winner by a plurality—not a majority—also will put a premium on drawing lessons from the outcome before parliamentary elections that must occur by April under the new constitution. Indeed, the presidential contest represents only the first, albeit the most important, in a two-round match for power. If South Korea elects a president by plurality, mobilizing a parliamentary majority could well be critical to determining whether the new leadership can rule effectively. [REDACTED]

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